

EXTRACTS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED JOURNAL OF  
JOHN JAMES AUDUBON.

BY RUTHVEN DEANE.

THE Journal from which these extracts are taken, covers the period from October 12, 1820, to December 30, 1821. This would have been included in 'Audubon and his Journals' but unfortunately it did not fall into the hands of the author until more than a year after this work had been completed and published. I am under many obligations to Miss M. R. Audubon for the privilege of publishing fourteen days of this diary, covering dates between October 12, 1820, and November 25, 1821. As there is now but little unpublished Auduboniana, excepting family letters, this portion of the Journal is of peculiar interest. It shows that period of the great naturalist's life, eleven years before the publication of the first volume of his 'Ornithological Biography,' when, without money and living where his talents were not appreciated, he was making a fight in which few could have conquered under similar conditions. To fully appreciate the 'Birds of America' one must read the early life of the author.

## FROM AUDUBON'S JOURNAL.

Oct. 12th, 1820 (*On the Ohio*). Shot an Autumnal Warbler<sup>1</sup> as Mr. A. Wilson is pleased to designate the young of the Yellow rumped Warbler; this was a young male in beautiful plumage for the season, and I drew it, as I feel perfectly convinced Mr. Wilson has made an error in presenting the bird as a new species.

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<sup>1</sup> As is well known, Wilson's Autumnal Warbler (*Sylvia autumnalis*) is the Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) or the Black-poll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*), according to different authors, in first winter plumage, while Audubon, detecting the fact that it was a young bird of a known species, failed to identify it correctly. This was not at all strange, for at that early date much had to be learned of the immature plumages of our birds. I have good cause to state that some people are too ready to call Audubon careless when it was not carelessness but ignorance, which was perfectly natural and excusable in those days, and which he had neither time nor opportunity to correct until later.

*Oct. 14th, 1820.* We returned to our boat with a Wild Turkey, a Telltale Godwit and a Hermit Thrush which was too much torn to make a drawing of it; this was the first time I had met with this bird and I felt particularly mortified at its condition.

*Nov. 2nd, 1820.* Floated down slowly within two miles of Henderson, I can scarcely conceive that I stayed there eight years and passed therein comfortably, for it is undoubtedly on the poorest spot in the country, according to my present opinion.

*Nov. 3rd, 1820.* We left our harbor at daybreak and passed Henderson about sunrise. I looked on the Mill<sup>1</sup> perhaps for the last time, and with thoughts that made my blood almost run cold, bid it an eternal farewell.

*Nov. 23rd, 1820.* I saw two large Eagle's Nests, one of them I remembered seeing as I went to New Orleans eighteen months ago. It had been worked upon, and no doubt young were raised in it. It is in a large cypress tree not very high, made of very large dead sticks, and about eight feet in diameter.

*New Orleans, Jan. 12th, 1821.* Early this morning I met an Italian painter at the theatre. I took him to N. Berthoud's<sup>2</sup> rooms and showed him the drawing of the White-headed Eagle. He was much pleased took me to his painting apartment at the theatre, then to the Directors, who very roughly offered me \$100 per month to paint with Monsieur l'Italien. I believe really now that my talents must be poor.

*Jan. 13th, 1821.* I rose up early tormented by many disagreeable thoughts, again nearly without a cent, in a bustling city where no one cares a fig for a man in my situation. I walked to Jarvis<sup>3</sup> the portrait painter and showed him some of my drawings. He leaned down, and examined them minutely, but never said they were good or bad; merely that when *he* drew an Eagle he made it resemble a Lion, and covered it with yellow feathers, or rather hair, not feathers, curious speech. Some people entered and

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<sup>1</sup> The Grist Mill erected by Audubon and Bakewell was completed in 1817 and still stands as a part of and adjoining the warehouse of Mr. David Clark, and is used for the storage of leaf tobacco.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Augustus Berthoud, brother-in-law of Audubon.

<sup>3</sup> John Wesley Jarvis, a self-taught portrait painter, who lived in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1820-1821. Born 1780, died 1834.

were so well pleased with my Eagle that they praised it, and Jarvis rudely whistled. I called him aside while Joseph [Mason]<sup>1</sup> rolled up my papers, and told him I had heard he required assistance to finish his portraits, *i.e.*, clothing and ground, and added that I had received good lessons from excellent masters. He asked me to come the next day and he would talk about it.

*Jan. 14th, 1821.* Called on Jarvis and did some work for him, but was but poorly paid, and found him so discourteous I shall not go again.

*March 31st, 1821.* I have spent my time these three days more at thinking than anything else, and often indeed have I thought my head very heavy. This morning I waited on Mr. Gordon<sup>2</sup> with a wish to receive from him an amendment to my letter to the President for all in my head is the Pacific expedition. I called on Mr. Vanderlyn,<sup>3</sup> the historical painter with my port folio, to show him some of my birds, with a view to ask him for a few lines of recommendation. He examined them attentively and called them *handsomely done*, but being far from possessing any knowledge of Ornithology or Natural History, I was quite satisfied he was no judge, but of their being better or worse shaded. Yet he spoke of the beautiful coloring and good positions, and told me he would with pleasure give me a certificate of *his having inspected them*. Are all men of talents fools and rude naturally, or intentionally? I cannot assert, but have often thought they were one or the other.

*April 9th, 1821.* Saw many birds of which I made a list, there are thirty-three. To see these in their haunts I was since half past two o'clock this morning until five this afternoon, wading often to my middle through the swamps, and then walking through the thickest woods I believe I have ever seen. Here is my list:

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Mason, son of a gentleman in Cincinnati, Ohio, of whom Audubon writes in his Journal: "October 12, 1820. Left Cincinnati today with Capt. Cummings and Joseph Mason, a youth about 18 years of age, he is intended as a companion and friend as well as a pupil." He remained with Audubon until July, 1822.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Gordon, a Scotchman, who married Ann Bakewell, youngest sister of Mrs. John James Audubon.

<sup>3</sup> John Vanderlyn, an historic painter, born 1776, died 23 September, 1852.

Mocking Birds, Orchard Orioles, Painted Buntings, Maryland Yellow-throats, Marsh Wrens, Water Crake, White-crowned Buntings, Indigo Buntings, Scarlet Tanagers, Turtle Doves, Tell-tale Godwits, Solitary Snipes, Bartram Snipes, Comorants, Sprig-tail Ducks, Purple Grackles, Blue Yellow-backed Warblers, Cardinal Grosbeaks, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Large-crested Flycatchers, White-eyed Flycatchers, Nighthawks, Turkey Buzzards, Carrion Crows, Common Gulls, Carolina Wrens, Partridges, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Green-blue Swallow,<sup>1</sup> White-bellied Swallow, Bank Swallow, besides a species of Heron new to me, and to all the hunters here. I killed it near Lake Barataria. I have drawn it in an awkward position.

*Aug. 21st, 1821.* Watched all night by the dead body of a friend of Mrs. Percy<sup>2</sup>; he was not known to me and had literally drunk himself to an everlasting sleep. Peace to his soul. I made a good sketch of his head as a present for his poor wife. On such occasions time flies very slow indeed, so much so that it looked as if it stood still, like the Hawk that poises over its prey.

*Nov. 2nd, 1821.* Finished my drawings of the Crested Hawk,<sup>3</sup> which proved a female. How rare the bird is I may not say being the only specimen I have ever seen, though I once before found some tail feathers of another killed by a squatter on the Ohio, which tail feathers having been kept compared exactly with these of the present bird.

*Nov. 10th, 1821.* Continue my close application to my ornithology, writing every day from morning until night, omitting no observation, correcting, re-arranging from my notes and measurements, and posting up; particularly all my land birds. The great many errors I found in the work of Wilson astonished me. I try to speak of them with care, and as seldom as possible, knowing

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<sup>1</sup> In 'Birds of America,' 8vo, Vol. I, 1840, p. 176, we read "Green-blue or White-bellied Swallow, *Hirundo viridis*, Wils. Amer. Orn. Vol. III, p. 44." This shows that Audubon knew that these names referred to the same species and the enumerating of both in this list was evidently unintentional, though written at an earlier date.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Charles Percy of Bayou Sara, Louisiana, in whose home Audubon's wife lived while he was abroad from 1826 to 1830.

<sup>3</sup> No previous mention of this Hawk is recorded in this Journal.

the good wish of that man, the hurry he was in, and the vast many heresay accounts he depended on.

*Nov. 25th, 1821.* Since I left Cincinnati I have finished 62 drawings of birds and plants, 3 quadrupeds, 2 snakes, fifty portraits of all sorts, and the large one of Father Antonio, besides giving many lessons and I have made out to send money to my wife sufficient for her and my Kentucky lads, and to live in humble comfort with only my talents and industry, without *one cent* to begin on.

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## THE EFFECT OF ALTITUDE ON BIRD MIGRATION.

BY WELLS W. COOKE.

SURROUNDED by mountains, Asheville, North Carolina, is situated in the valley of the French Broad River, at an altitude of two thousand feet. Directly east is Raleigh, at about three hundred feet above ocean level. This difference in altitude causes quite a difference in the climate of the two places; the average temperature at Raleigh is about 60° F., while at Asheville it is five degrees colder. The former is in the Austro-riparian life zone, the latter at the extreme upper limit of the Carolinian. A difference in the avifauna naturally follows these variations in climate. The higher altitude of Asheville prevents some birds from occurring there that are found in summer at Raleigh. Among these may be mentioned the Chuck-will's-widow, Blue Grosbeak, and the Prothonotary Warbler. In a larger number of cases, birds remain through the winter at Raleigh that are seldom if ever found at Asheville during this season. Examples of this class are the Swamp Sparrow, Chewink, Brown Thrasher, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. These all appear at Asheville as spring migrants.

A few mountain-loving species are regular visitors at Asheville, but occur as rare stragglers only at Raleigh. The Baltimore Oriole is a striking example, and the same preference is shown by the Olive-sided Flycatcher and the Blackburnian Warbler.